A FEW WORDS FROM THIS YEAR’S WINNERS...

Dr Stephen Lim Wee Hun
Dept of Psychology, ATEA winner

“How would you describe your approach to teaching and educating students?”

As a teacher of psychology at the NUS, my deepest desire is to bring life-transforming experiences to all my students. One of my pedagogical strategies is the inculcation of critical thinking skills in my students. I would challenge them to evaluate why psychology is the way it is, and to ultimately work towards inventing new scientific knowledge. Another key strategy is the use of teaching innovations to motivate and reward my students in their learning journeys. For instance, I recently created the Stephen Lim Sustained Critical Thinking Award which recognises an NUS psychology student who has completed three academic modules under my instruction, and consistently demonstrated critical thinking excellence.”

Here’s a short excerpt from the Faculty Teaching Excellence Committee’s citation on my pedagogy:

Dr Stephen Lim (the honoured recipient of the 2011 Faculty Special Critical Thinking Award) has been teaching for only a year but has already shown himself to be an exceptional teacher. His overall teaching effectiveness scores for all five modules, which included a small class of 15 students and a large class of 199 students, are way above 4.500, three of which are above 4.800 and all of which are way above the departmental average of 4.083 and the faculty average of 4.089. The percentage of teaching award student nominations he received ranged up to 78%. In particular, he received 106 nominations (out of 177 respondents) for PL2131, a difficult statistics class which Psychology majors would rather avoid. These achievements are all the more impressive considering that this was the first time that Dr Lim had been put in charge of teaching an entire module (or rather, five entire modules). Dr Lim started several innovative programmes to motivate his students. For instance, he instituted the “Stephen Lim Innovative Idea Prize” in his classes to encourage critical thinking and the “Stephen Lim Commendation” to encourage strong research. Dr Lim excels in research supervision. He works with his students on various research projects practically round the clock. The research projects that his students engaged in have produced novel findings, and some of these projects have won international best research prizes and awards. His teaching philosophy has proven to be highly impactful. As one of his students commented, “Prof Stephen is one of those teachers I would really call life changing.”